DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 669 CS 012 813

TITLE Ready--Set--Read (For Caregivers): Early Childhood Language Activities for Children from Birth through Age Five. America Reads Challenge.

INSTITUTION Corporation for National Service.; Department of Education, Washington, DC.

PUB DATE 97

NOTE 111p.; For "Ready--Set--Read" for Families, see CS 012 812.

PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Caregiver Child Relationship; Caregiver Role; *Early Childhood Education; *Language Acquisition; Learning Activities; Reading Instruction; Reading Processes; *Skill Development; Writing Instruction; Writing Processes; *Young Children

ABSTRACT

This Ready--Set--Read Kit includes an activity guide for caregivers, a 1997-98 early childhood activity calendar, and an early childhood growth chart. The activity guide part of the kit presents activities and ideas that caregivers (family child care providers and the teachers, staff, and volunteers in child development programs) can use to help young children learn about language. The activity guide part of the kit divides activities into 4 age groups: young babies (birth to 8 months); crawlers and walkers (8 to 18 months); toddlers (18 to 36 months) and preschoolers (3 to 5 years). The activity guide concludes with a list of reading and writing play materials, the 40-item American Library Association's Suggested Book List for Young Readers, and 13 additional resources. The calendar part of the kit is filled with helpful tips and special activities that promote reading and language skills for young children. The growth chart part of the kit measures children's height and language development, and gives age-appropriate activities to promote language development for young children. (RS)

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ED 406 669

AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

READY★SET★READ

FOR CAREGIVERS

Early Childhood Language Activities
for Children from Birth through Age Five

A Joint Project of the Corporation for National Service,
the U.S. Department of Education, and
the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This booklet for caregivers of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

We wish to acknowledge Derry Koralek as the principal author of this volume, with assistance from Ray Collins and Betty McLeod of the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center; Margaret McLaughlin and Jim Ekstrom of the Corporation for National Service; and Pat McKee, Alan Ginsburg, Adriana de Kanter, Val Plisko, Susan Thompson-Hoffman, Manny Smith, Brenda Long, Jessica Ellsworth, and Corey Chatis of the U.S. Department of Education.

Other persons who assisted in the production of this booklet include Anne Goldstein, Director, National Child Care Information Center; Jewel Bazilio-Bellegarde, Corporation for National Service; and Joan Lombardi, Jennifer Chang, and Lillian Sugarman of the Child Care Bureau.

We also wish to acknowledge the graphic design work of Eve Guianan and Loren Holtkamp of Books and Beyond, with production oversight by Ellie Topolovac and Sue Holtkamp of Books and Beyond.

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Dear Caregiver:

Welcome to READY★SET★READ, an AMERICA READS CHALLENGE booklet that is filled with activities and ideas caregivers* can use every day to help young children learn about language. Children's language learning is rooted in the warm, loving environment of their homes and families. When caregivers work with families to support and build on the language skills children learn at home, children learn quickly. Most of the ideas in READY★SET★READ are simple to do, using materials found in your child care setting or at the library. These activities and ideas can be used with children as you play and do daily activities together.

The activities are presented for four age groups:

- **Young Babies** (Birth to 8 months)
- **Crawlers and Walkers** (8 to 18 months)
- **Toddlers** (18 to 36 months)
- **Preschoolers** (3 to 5 years)

The ideas for one age group may also work for a younger or older child. Using what you know about each child's skills and interests can help you decide which activities to use. You can read the section for one age group now and save the others for later.

Children learn about language when their caregivers:

- Offer interesting books and play materials that match the children's skills, interests, and cultures
- Read aloud to children every day
- Keep reading and writing materials where children can reach them on their own
- Show children how they use reading and writing to learn, have fun, and get jobs done
- Listen to children's ideas, answer their questions, and model how language is used

Parents are their children's first teachers, but caregivers play an essential role in supporting the work begun at home.

On the next page are some simple tips to help the children in your care learn about listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These basic, daily activities can make a difference in children's language growth.

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* In this booklet "caregivers" refers to family child care providers and the teachers, staff, and volunteers in child development programs.

TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

- ❑ Talk with children as you play and do daily activities together.
- ❑ Read with children at a regular time every day and when they ask you.
- ❑ Take toddlers and preschoolers to the library so that they can choose books to read. Find out about your library's special books and services.
- ❑ Create a special place in your child care facility for reading and writing for toddlers and preschoolers.
- ❑ Keep books and other reading materials where children can reach them. Add new books as children's skills and interests change.
- ❑ Keep writing materials such as washable, nontoxic crayons and markers, paints and brushes, and different kinds of paper where children can reach them.
- ❑ Show children how you read and write every day to have fun and to get things done.
- ❑ Point out to children the printed words at child care and in the community.
- ❑ Encourage children to do things for themselves when they are ready. Let them feed and dress themselves, and clean up after themselves, even if these tasks take more time and are not done perfectly.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU:

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG BABIES

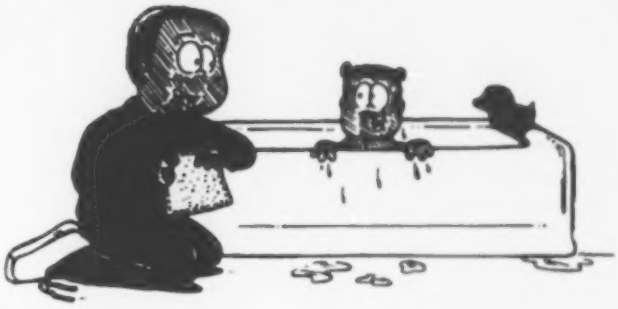
(Birth to 8 Months Old)

WHAT DO YOUNG BABIES DO?

- ❑ Cry, make other sounds, and move their bodies.
- ❑ Listen and respond to the sounds and voices around them.
- ❑ Coo, gurgle, laugh, and babble to themselves and others.
- ❑ Enjoy listening to stories.
- ❑ Smile when people smile at them.
- ❑ Respond to their names.
- ❑ Take turns while singing and playing with another person.
- ❑ Pick up objects with their fingers and thumbs.
- ❑ Move objects from one hand to the other.

HOW DO YOUNG BABIES LEARN?

Katie is in the bathtub splashing in the water with both hands. Her father sits on the floor next to the tub making sure she is safe. "Katie, Katie," he says as he picks up a washcloth. "Are you ready to play our special game?"



Katie looks up and sees her father's smiling face. She smiles at him and laughs. He says, "Let's play Peek-a-Boo," and puts a washcloth in front of his face. Katie reaches out and pats the top of his head. Her father says, "Peek-a-Boo, Katie, I can't see you." He lowers the washcloth so his eyes are no longer covered. Katie squeals with delight. He covers his eyes again and says, "Peek-a-Boo, Katie, I still can't see you."

Katie's father holds the washcloth out toward her, saying, "Your turn, Katie." She takes the washcloth from his hand and puts it in front of her face. Her father says, "Where's Katie?"

Katie drops the washcloth in the water and splashes with her hands. She babbles to her father, "Dadadada. Babababa." He says, "I think you're saying that you're tired of playing Peek-a-Boo. Let's play with your sponges."

Like many young babies, Katie is learning about language:

- ❑ She knows that it's fun to play with another person.
- ❑ She looks up when her father says her name.
- ❑ She smiles when her father smiles at her.

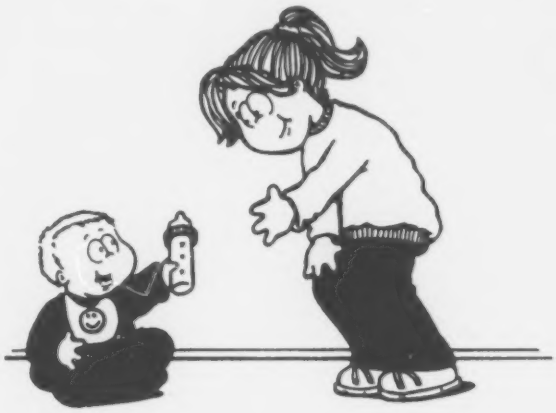
Katie's father helps her learn about language:

- ❑ He talks with her during a daily activity--bathtime.
- ❑ He says her name again and again so that she will learn to recognize it.
- ❑ He takes several turns in their game and then encourages her to take a turn.
- ❑ He responds to her babbles as if he knows what she is saying.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR YOUNG BABIES

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Listening and Talking Young babies enjoy being with other people. • Spend individual time talking with and responding to every baby many times during every day. Let babies know that you think that each one is special and fun to be with. • Learn to recognize the meaning of each baby's special cries and gestures. Organize your day so that you can quickly respond to babies' cries and provide what they seem to need--a dry diaper, a hug, a warm bottle. • Introduce babies to taking turns, as they will do when they are older and begin talking with other people. Respond to their sounds and actions by smiling, making noises, or waving a stuffed animal in front of them. Play simple Peek-a-Boo games and sing songs. At first you will take many more turns than the babies do. As they get older, babies will take more turns by making happy noises and wiggling their bodies. How to help families: Always think of families as your partners in helping babies grow and learn. Keep families up-to-date on what their babies do at child care.

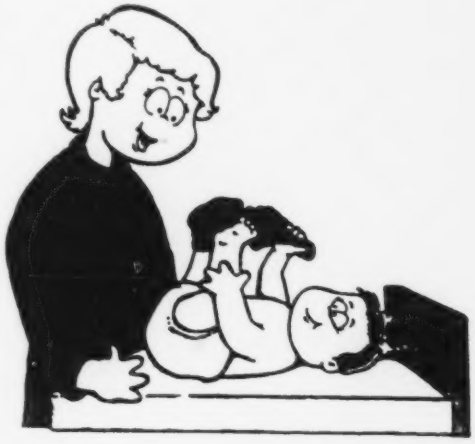
AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Young babies coo and babble to themselves and others. • Sing, coo, babble, smile, and laugh with babies during diapering, feeding, and play times. Let them know you notice them cooing and babbling to themselves. Respond to their sounds and actions. "You touched my nose, Carlos. Now I'm going to touch your nose." • Use your voice to make the sounds most babies love best--talking, singing, and laughing. Sing and recite your own favorite songs and rhymes, and reserve a special song or rhyme for each baby. • Ask families to teach you the rhymes and traditional games their babies enjoy at home. Learn a few important words in the babies' home languages so you can comfort them as their families do.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Young babies listen to the sounds and voices around them. • Point out the sounds babies hear indoors and outdoors. "That was Inez banging the spoons together." "A train just went by." • Play different kinds of music and move with babies. Respond to the music's rhythm and beat. Sway gently, turn in circles, move the baby's arms and legs, or clap hands together. Talk about what you are doing. • Use babies' names when talking with them so that they will learn to recognize and respond to their own names. "Good morning, Kevin." • Give simple directions to babies by using words and gestures, and by varying the expression on your face. For example, a caregiver smiles and holds out her hand while saying, "Kendra, give me the bottle, please." When Kendra holds out the bottle, the caregiver takes it from her and says, "Thank you, Kendra. Let's put the bottle away now." 

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Reading Young babies like feeling close to special people such as their caregivers. • Make books part of your one-on-one times with babies. Hold babies in your lap while reading to them. Although they don't understand exactly what you are saying, babies love being close to you and listening to your voice. Over time, babies will associate these pleasant feelings with books and reading. • Respond to what babies want to do during reading times. Babies may grasp a cloth or plastic book and put it in their mouth. This is how they find out about books. Be sure to wash the book later, so that germs aren't passed from one baby to another. If a baby wiggles and squirms, stop reading; the baby is telling you it's time to do something else. • Point at pictures in books and name them. Encourage babies when they point at pictures on their own. "James, show me the ball. That's right. That's the ball." Let babies try to turn the pages by themselves. How to help families: Encourage families to read to their babies at home. Tell them what their baby says and does when you read together at child care. Explain that many babies who are read to learn to love reading. Reading reminds children of the pleasant times they spent looking at books with a caring adult.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Young babies can explore books on their own. • Display books with other toys where babies can reach them on their own. For example, place books on the blanket or carpeted area where babies play. • Look for books with simple, bright pictures against a solid background. Cloth and plastic books work well because they can be washed. Cardboard books are good for babies who are learning to turn pages. • Make a set of picture cards for the babies in your care. Look for simple pictures of familiar objects in magazines or catalogs. For example, a puppy, a sneaker, or a flower. Paste each picture on a piece of cardboard and cover with clear adhesive paper. Keep the pictures in an open container such as a plastic dishpan. Sit with babies and talk about the pictures.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Developing Muscles For Writing Young babies use their hands, fingers, and senses to learn. • Offer a variety of safe play materials that babies can hold, shake, push, pull, lift, and hit. Babies tend to put everything in their mouths. Make sure their toys and play materials are washable and too large to be swallowed. • Babies often like household items just as much as expensive toys. Babies can use a set of plastic measuring cups in many ways. An assortment of textured fabrics give babies something to touch; you can talk about how each type of fabric feels. • Simple homemade toys also are fun for babies. Make cloth balls and sock puppets they can grasp and put in their mouths. How to help families: Show families how to make safe play materials for babies with things they have at home. For example, they could make sock puppets, mobiles, or a textured blanket.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Young babies are learning to do things for themselves. • Let babies pat, touch, then grasp their own bottles while you hold them. Babies can hold a diaper, pull off their socks, and raise their arms for you to remove a shirt. • Show your excitement when a baby develops enough eye-hand coordination to reach out and grab something. "Emily, look at the mobile. You made it move. Can you make it move again?" • Keep track of each baby's new skills so that you will know when to make changes to keep the baby safe. For example, when babies can grasp and pull on the mobile over the changing table, you will have to raise it and offer new toys that are safe. 

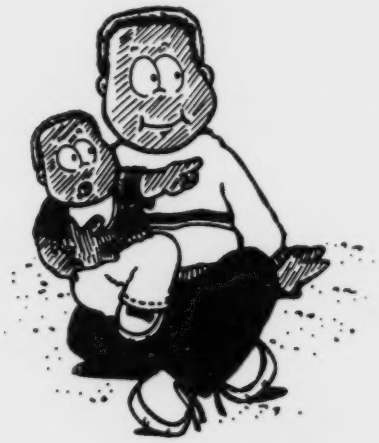
ENJOYING OUR COMPANY:

ACTIVITIES
FOR
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS

(8 to 18 Months Old)

WHAT DO CRAWLERS AND WALKERS DO?

- ❑ Use sounds and gestures to say hello or get attention.
- ❑ Point at things they want.
- ❑ Say a few simple words.
- ❑ Like rhymes and simple songs.
- ❑ Enjoy reading with a favorite person.
- ❑ Turn the pages in sturdy cardboard books.
- ❑ Put objects such as nesting cups inside each other.
- ❑ Fill containers with water or small objects, then dump them out.
- ❑ Hold large crayons and make marks on paper.



HOW DO CRAWLERS AND WALKERS LEARN?

Marcus picks up a book with cardboard pages and a duck on the cover. He puts the book in his mouth for a moment, then waves it in the air. Marcus looks at his big sister, Maria, and makes noises that sound a lot like words. Maria says, "Do you want to read? Bring the book to me. We can read together."

With book in hand, Marcus crawls to Maria. She lifts Marcus into her lap and holds the book so that he can see it. She points to the duck on the cover. "That's a duck. Let's see what's inside."

Marcus turns the page. He pats the picture and says something that sounds like words. "That's right," says Maria. "The baby is in the bathtub."

After looking at a few more pages, Marcus squirms and wiggles. "Okay," says Maria. "Have you read enough? Let me help you down." She puts Marcus on the floor and he crawls away.

Like many other crawlers and walkers, Marcus is learning about language:

- ❑ He knows that people will respond to his sounds and actions.
- ❑ He thinks it's fun to look at books with another person.
- ❑ He knows how to wait for his turn while talking and reading with his sister.

Marcus's sister, Maria, helps him learn about language:

- ❑ She responds to his sounds and actions as if he were saying words.
- ❑ She lets him turn the pages of the book.
- ❑ She talks to him about what he seems to be saying.
- ❑ She lets him find something else to do when he's lost interest in reading.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR CRAWLERS AND WALKERS

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Listening and Talking Crawlers and walkers are learning that it's fun to be with other people. • Play games with babies that allow them to take turns--the way people do when talking with each other. You can roll a ball back and forth, play Peek-a-Boo by hiding something under a blanket or behind your back, and imitate babies' babbles. "You made a new sound, 'aba aba aba'." • Set the stage for a familiar game, then wait until the baby shows interest in playing. For example, take out the blanket and toy you use for Peek-a-Boo and sit down on the floor where you and the baby usually play together. Wait patiently until the baby starts the game by covering the toy with the blanket. Then take your turn. "Michael. Where's the bunny? Where did the bunny go?" • Encourage babies to notice each other and what they are doing. "Nina is holding her bottle while I hold her. You can touch her gently. Look, she smiled at you." • Play a game, sing a song, or read a book with two babies at once. They will enjoy being with you and with each other. "Jonathan, here comes the ball. You caught it. Now roll it to me. Sara, here comes the ball. Good catch, Sara. Now roll it to me." How to help families: Tell families about the games their babies play at child care and ask them to tell you about the games babies play at home. Try some of their ideas, and encourage them to try some of yours.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Crawlers and walkers use sounds, words, and gestures to express themselves. • Pay close attention to babies' babbles, words, and actions so that you can understand what they are saying. "Lena, I see you pointing to the bear. Do you want me to get it for you?" Be patient. It may take several tries before you understand what a baby is saying. "Oh, Lena wants her blanket, not the bear. Here it is." • Show your excitement when babies begin to talk. Help families keep track of these first words. Provide the names for objects, actions, and feelings. "Truck. Garrett is pushing the truck. Garrett is happy." • Get to know what babies mean when they say a word. Many babies use the same word to send different messages, changing their tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. Watch and listen, then respond to what you think the baby is saying. For example: Cara looks up, points to the sky, and says, "Up." Her caregiver looks up and sees a kite flying in the distance. He says to Cara, "That's a kite. It's UP in the sky." Cara laughs and says again, "Up."

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Reading Crawlers and walkers like being read to. • Read babies' favorite books again and again. Doing this helps babies remember the pictures and words. They are comforted by familiar activities such as this. Babies enjoy joining in by naming the pictures on a page. • Read when a baby asks you to. Let the baby pick the book, time, and place for reading. Go to the next page when the baby is ready, and read for as long as he or she is interested. • Read books in English and in the babies' home language. Ask families to tell you about books their babies read at home. Visit the children's room at the library and ask the librarian about books in babies' home languages. • Point to or touch the objects in the pictures and name them. Relate the objects and activities in books to the babies' lives. "That baby has a high chair like yours. That's a ball. Jimmy likes to play with our ball." How to help families: Ask families what their babies like to do at home and elsewhere. Look for books about objects and activities that are familiar to babies. For example, if a baby likes going to the park, look for a book with simple pictures of outdoor scenes. Crawlers and walkers like to look at books on their own. • Provide books with thick cardboard pages that are easy to turn and hard to damage. When the books get torn, put them away until they can be repaired and returned to the shelf. When babies damage books beyond repair, order new copies.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	• Make it easy for babies to choose the books they want to explore. Store books with covers face up in open baskets on the low shelves used for other toys and play materials. Have babies help put books and toys away several times a day. • Look for books about everyday activities--taking a bath, going for a walk, eating breakfast. Make sure the books show children's cultures, ethnic groups, family life, and abilities in positive ways. • Make books that tell stories about the babies in your care. If you have a computer you can use it for the words and pictures. If not, print the words by hand and use photographs, pictures cut from magazines, or simple drawings as illustrations. Cover cardboard pages with clear plastic and bind with cotton string or yarn. Write new books throughout the year.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Developing Muscles For Writing Crawlers and walkers can hold and use fat crayons to scribble. • Introduce crayons and paper to babies. Begin by showing them how to use crayons to make marks on large pieces of paper. Tape the paper to the table so that it will stay flat. If babies try to color on walls, floors, and tables, gently redirect them back to the paper. They will soon learn that crayons and paper go together. • Sit with babies while they scribble, to help and show your interest in their efforts and accomplishments. "Azim, look what you did. You made those marks on the paper." Allow babies to decide when they are finished. Then put away the crayons and paper. Bring them out later for another scribbling session.

TALKING ABOUT ME:

ACTIVITIES FOR TODDLERS

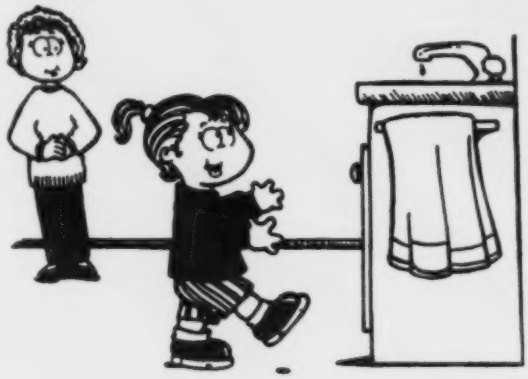
(18 to 36 Months Old)

WHAT DO TODDLERS DO?

- ❑ Learn new words every day.
- ❑ Speak using groups of words ("Ned go out").
- ❑ Take turns while talking with people.
- ❑ Ask many questions ("What that?").
- ❑ Name objects in picture books ("Ball").
- ❑ Follow two-part directions ("Pick up the socks and put them in the basket.").
- ❑ Say "no" and "not."
- ❑ Copy adult voices and actions.
- ❑ Follow simple stories.
- ❑ Look at books on their own.
- ❑ Join in when a book has rhymes and repeated words.
- ❑ Scribble with crayons and washable markers.

HOW DO TODDLERS LEARN?

Rosa tugs on Ms. Vega's arm and says, "Wet." Ms. Vega says, "Your diaper is wet. Let's go change it."



Rosa lies down on the changing table. Ms. Vega washes her hands and tells Rosa what she is doing. "I'm washing away all the germs so you will stay healthy. I'm taking off your shorts. They're red, like your sneakers." Rosa says, "Red sneakers."

Ms. Vega takes a diaper from the shelf. She replaces Rosa's wet diaper with a dry one. "All done," says Ms. Vega. "Wash hands?" asks Rosa. "Yes," says Ms. Vega, "let's wash our hands." "Wash hands," says Rosa.

Rosa heads for the sink, singing. "This way, wash hands, wash hands, wash hands." Ms. Vega sings along, then says, "Rosa, you learned a new song to sing." "Sing song," says Rosa.

Like many toddlers, Rosa is learning about language:

- ❑ She communicates her needs using groups of words.
- ❑ She repeats words she hears adults speak.
- ❑ She learns a simple song.
- ❑ She asks questions.
- ❑ She answers questions.

Rosa's caregiver helps her learn about language:

- ❑ She responds to Rosa's request by answering with a group of words.
- ❑ She describes what she is doing and names a color--red.
- ❑ She asks a simple question that Rosa knows how to answer.
- ❑ She sings with Rosa, then congratulates her on learning the song.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR TODDLERS

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Listening and Talking Toddlers are beginning to enjoy make-believe play. • Have plenty of telephones (toys and real ones) on hand. Look for push-button and portable phones like the ones toddlers see at home. Help toddlers talk on the phone to a friend or family member. "You seem a little sad today, Jenny. Would you like to call your Mom? Okay, let's call her. Mrs. Trent, here's Jenny. She wants to say 'hello'." • Provide dress-up clothes and props--hats, scarves, shoes, keys, tote bags, and pocketbooks. Most toddlers like to dress up, pack a bag, and pretend to leave and come back. They play house with pots, pans, dishes, and other household items. • Join toddlers in their make-believe play to introduce new words and to encourage them to talk. "That smells delicious. What are you cooking?" "Are you going to work? Say 'hello' to your Dad for me." How to help families: Invite families to share traditional songs and rhymes from their culture. Make an audiotape of the toddlers singing a song or saying a rhyme to share with families. Play the tape during drop-off and pick-up times, and lend it to families who are interested.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers are learning to play with each other. • Invite two to four toddlers to do something together. You can sing a song, do a fingerplay, talk to puppets, or play a silly word game about opposites. "Do plates go *on* the table or *under* the table?" "Are elephants *big* or *little?*" • Move on to another activity when toddlers lose interest. As toddlers' attention spans grow, slowly increase the time for very small group activities.

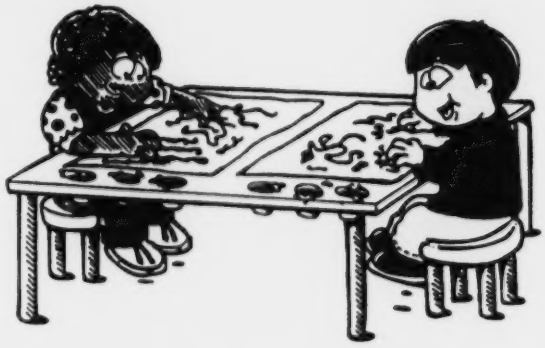
AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers ask a lot of questions. • Answer toddlers' many questions. Try a simple answer first. If that's not enough, try again. Toddlers may ask more questions because they don't understand the answer or because they like asking questions. "Where's my banana?" — "You ate your banana." "Where did it go?" — "It's in your tummy." "Why?" — "Because you chewed and swallowed it." • Be patient. Toddlers ask many, many questions because they are trying to learn as much as they can about the world. They come to you because they know you can help them learn.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers like talking to people who will listen to their stories. • Let toddlers know that they have interesting things to say. Comment on what a toddler is doing, ask a question that encourages the child to talk, or join in the play and talk about what you are doing together. "Mia, our soap bubbles are floating in the air." • Talk during activities, such as when eating, washing hands, and picking up toys. Learn some words and phrases in a toddler's home language. "Este pollo es muy bueno." • Listen to a toddler for as long as it takes the child to tell a story. Ask questions to help the child explain what happened.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Reading Toddlers like being read to. • Read toddlers' favorite books in English and their home languages, if possible. Toddlers like to hear the same book again and again. After they memorize some of the story, they can join in and tell what happens next. Later, they may want to retell the story on their own. • Read to toddlers in very small groups. Make sure everyone can see the pictures in the book. Look for big book versions of toddlers' favorites. Let toddlers decide when they wish to leave the group, but continue reading to the toddlers who are still interested. • Read to toddlers one-on-one. Choose a story that's just right for a toddler in your care. • Read when a toddler asks you. Read when you think an active toddler needs some quiet time. Read indoors and outdoors, at the beginning and end of the day, and whenever you can take time to give a toddler your special attention. How to help families: Tell families about the books, materials, and services available at their local library. Encourage them to visit the library often to find books that are just right for their toddlers.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers are gradually learning about books and reading. • Point to the words as you read to toddlers, so that they will begin to understand that you are reading the words, not the pictures. They probably won't fully understand this until they are older. • Describe the pictures. Point out details the toddlers might have missed. "He is missing a button. See how his strap hangs down?" "The daddy is kissing the baby because he loves him so much." • Help toddlers understand and talk about a story. Ask questions to help them connect the story to their own lives. "What did you do when you were a baby?" "How do you help your Dad get ready for dinner?" • Extend older toddlers' enjoyment of a popular story by putting out new props or leading a simple activity. For example, after reading stories about baby animals, put a basket of farm animals next to the blocks. After reading stories about caterpillars, ask the children to wiggle like caterpillars, then fly like butterflies.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Building Muscles For Writing Toddlers can use their hands and fingers to play with toys and to do many things for themselves. • Keep toys on low, open shelves so that toddlers can choose what they want to play with and put things away when done. Put things that are used together near each other. For example, put crayons on the same shelf as the paper. • Encourage toddlers to help take care of their toys and to keep the child care setting tidy. Have several clean-up times each day. Provide toddler-size cleaning tools, such as small brooms and dust-pans. • Follow a schedule that gives toddlers plenty of time to take part in routines such as eating, handwashing, and getting ready to go outdoors. Make it easy for toddlers to do things without your help: ❑ Place cubbies and coat hooks at toddlers' height and show them how to hang up their coats. ❑ Provide cups and eating utensils small enough to fit in toddlers' hands. ❑ Mark each toothbrush with a special symbol--a star, an X, a dot--so children can know which toothbrush is theirs. ❑ Place tissues and paper towels where toddlers can reach them. • Provide an assortment of table toys and materials that encourage toddlers to use their hands and fingers, such as pegs to place in pegboards and blocks to stack and then knock down. These items must be large enough so that toddlers won't choke on them. • Offer new materials as toddlers' skills improve. Older toddlers can build eye-hand coordination while doing puzzles with more pieces and while fitting small blocks together. They may be ready to use a sifter in the sand box and small boats at a water play table.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	How to help families: Take photographs of toddlers cleaning up, washing their hands, and putting on their coats, and post them on a bulletin board near the door so that families can see their toddlers being independent. Ask families to tell you what their toddlers can do on their own at home. **Toddlers can use a variety of drawing and writing tools.** • Provide many things to draw and write with and on. Store crayons, washable markers, and chalk where toddlers can get them without help from an adult. Large paper is best for toddlers' drawing and writing because toddlers need space to make wide movements with their arms. For variety, toddlers can draw and write on chalkboards and on the sidewalk. • Set up easels, washable paint in a few colors, and brushes with short handles and wide bristles for toddlers to use every day. • Encourage toddlers to use their fingers to make wavy lines and circles with fingerpaint on trays or a plastic tablecloth.  **Toddlers are beginning to notice letters and writing.** • Introduce letters in a casual way. Provide some alphabet blocks, puzzles, stamps, and magnets for toddlers to play with. • Let toddlers see you writing. Sit down with a toddler while making a shopping list, talk about the sign you are making, and explain what's in the note you are sending home to families. Toddlers are likely to copy your writing in the same way they copy other adult activities.

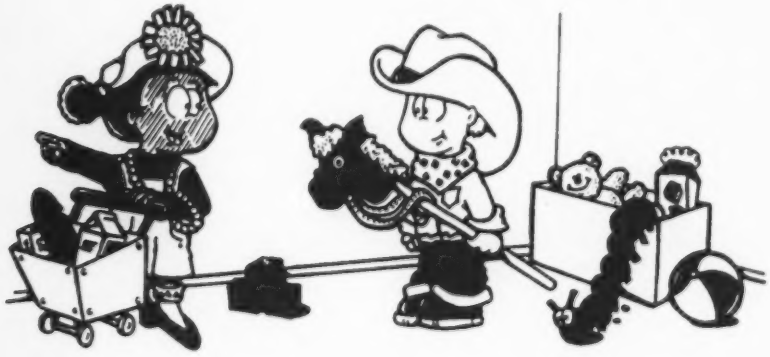
USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN:

ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

(3 to 5 Years Old)

WHAT DO PRESCHOOLERS DO?

- ❑ Listen to stories and to conversations.
- ❑ Talk to adults and other children in complex sentences.
- ❑ Master many rules of grammar.
- ❑ Make up silly words and stories.
- ❑ Use language to think, to share ideas and feelings, and to learn new things.
- ❑ Enjoy the same books over and over and look at new books.
- ❑ Retell familiar stories to themselves and others.
- ❑ Think about what the characters in a book might feel or do.
- ❑ Draw and write with pencils, crayons, and markers.
- ❑ See print around them and watch adults read and write.
- ❑ Imitate adult writing by scribble writing.
- ❑ Copy shapes and some letters.



HOW DO PRESCHOOLERS LEARN?

Gina bounces out of bed and hurries to the kitchen. She opens the cabinet, takes out a box of cereal, then puts it back. She takes out another box and says, "Grandpa, this is my cereal. It has a big 'P' and lots of stars."

Grandpa says, "That's good thinking." Gina points to a letter on the box, "That's a 'P.'" She traces the letter in the air and says, " 'P' as in Peter. Peter's name starts with a 'P'. It's on his cubby."

Grandpa makes an offer. "Today, we can have our regular story time and then write together. I need to write a letter to a friend. You can write, too."

Gina puts her empty bowl in the sink and runs to find her mother. "Mom, I'm gonna read and write with Grandpa." Her mother says, "That sounds like fun. When I take you to family child care, I'll tell Ms. Jenkins that you like to write. You can write at her house and at home."

Like many preschoolers, Gina is learning language:

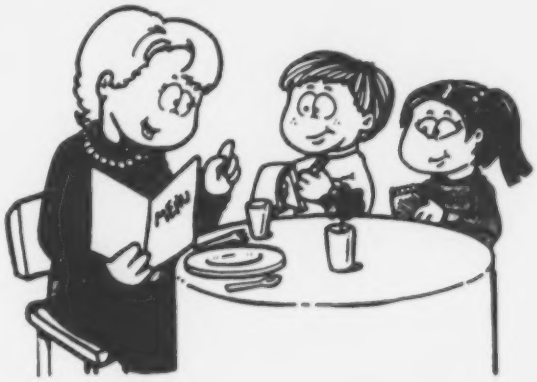
- ❑ She knows that letters (the P) and pictures (the stars) have meaning.
- ❑ She knows there is a 'P' on her cereal box and at the beginning of Peter's name.
- ❑ She knows that people take turns when talking to each other.

Gina's family helps her learn about language:

- ❑ They have a regular story time every day.
- ❑ Grandpa encourages her thinking, so Gina continues exploring the letters on the box.
- ❑ Grandpa offers to write with Gina.
- ❑ Mom talks to Ms. Jenkins, so that Gina can write at family child care and at home.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Listening and Talking Preschoolers listen and talk as they use materials and take part in activities. • Offer books without words so that children can make up their own stories to go with the pictures. • Record books on tape and place them with the tape player. Include blank tapes so that children can make their own recordings. • Teach children nonsense rhymes, songs, poems, and chants. Ask families to help you learn songs, poems, and stories in the children's home languages. • Make up songs and stories about the children in the group and include their names in familiar songs and finger plays. • Invite children to tell their favorite stories in their own words or to recall a real event. After the story they can act out stories with each other. How to help families: Ask families to help you collect dress-up clothes and props for the children's dramatic play. This is a good way to provide materials that represent children's families and cultures. Preschoolers talk, invent stories, and use their imaginations during make-believe play. • Provide puppets, dress-up clothes, and accessories for make-believe play. Include items children can use to explore play themes such as a gas station, grocery store, or restaurant.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	• Offer children a new idea for their play by asking a question. "Does this restaurant serve chili? I'd really like a nice big bowl of chili." • Suggest a role for a quiet child who may have difficulty getting involved in make-believe play. "I see two people waiting on tables in this restaurant. Do you have a cook?"  **Preschoolers can express their ideas and listen and respond to other people.** • Start conversations with children and keep them going. Watch what a child is doing, then comment or add new information. For example, Monte is looking at the bean plants the children planted last month. To start a conversation, his teacher could say: "I grew butter beans in my garden last year." Wait for the child to respond. It may take a while for her to absorb what you said and think of a reply. If the child doesn't respond, try again. "What kind of beans do you like to eat?" If the child does respond, try to find out what he or she wants to talk about and say something about the child's interests. "There sure are a lot of different beans--black beans, string beans, pinto beans. We have a book about beans. Let's see what it says."

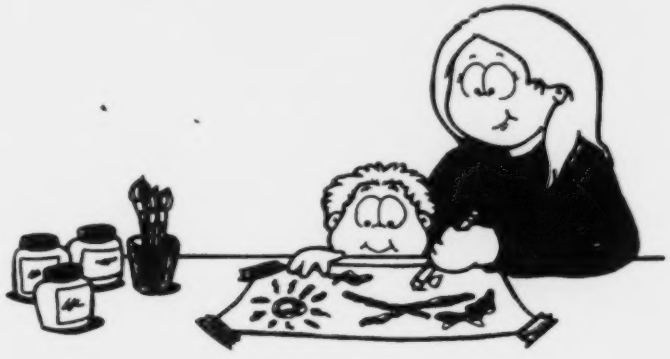
AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	• Talk with children during outdoor play, while painting or drawing, at meals and snacks, or while putting away toys. Here are some tips: ❑ Listen carefully. Smile and nod to show your interest. ❑ Help a child add missing information to a confusing story. "Did Rex jump over the fence or was the gate open?" ❑ Comment or ask a question to help a child continue: "Rex must be a good jumper." "How did you get Rex to come home?" Preschoolers are learning how to talk with each other. • Help children learn to talk with each other in small groups. Remind children to listen to the speaker. "Tory is talking now, Carlos. Tory, tell us about cooking with your Dad." "Carlos, we enjoyed your story about going to the barber shop with your uncle. Now it's Drew's turn to talk. Drew, what did you do over the weekend?" • Sit with children during mealtimes and help them learn to take turns talking and listening, to stay on the topic, and to keep their conversation going.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Reading Preschoolers like being read to. • Read to small groups at story times. Make sure the children are comfortable. Show the cover of the book you will read and introduce the characters. Tell a little bit about the story. Hold the book so that the children can see the pictures. Make faces and change your voice to bring the characters to life. Stop and talk about what the pictures show and what might happen next. Discuss what the characters are doing and how they might be feeling. Ask and answer questions. • Read to one or two children at a time when they make a request or when you want to share a book that's just right for a particular child. Use these read-aloud sessions to encourage children to talk about the story and the characters and to share their own ideas. • Learn about your library's services for young children. Ask about bilingual story times, special story hours for child care programs, and workshops for caregivers. Sometimes librarians can visit child care programs to discuss books and ideas. • Pass along to families the library's fliers and brochures, book lists, and information about parenting resources. How to help families: Support family reading times by allowing children to borrow books overnight or for a few days. Sign up for programs that provide free or inexpensive books and reading materials. Sponsor a new or used book fair. Learn about family literacy programs in your community. Sponsor a workshop on reading with children. Preschoolers like to look at books on their own. • Create a colorful, well-lit, carpeted library area with soft chairs or pillows. Place books, magazines, and other reading materials with covers face up on low shelves or a rack so children can see them. Decorate the area with book posters and displays about favorite books. Offer a flannel board, puppets or other materials for acting out stories.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	• Read and show books to the children about their current interests, for example, books on bridges and tunnels for block building, cookbooks with snack recipes, and a nature guide to look up leaves collected on a walk. • Encourage reading in all rooms and areas used by children. Create places for a child to read alone or with a friend, such as a beanbag chair under a loft, a large cardboard box, a pile of pillows in a quiet corner, or a blanket under a shady tree. Preschoolers like books about familiar characters, scenes, and events. • Select books that match children's ages and developmental stages that show their cultures, ethnic group, families, and abilities. Look for books that respond to a child's special interest (space travel), or a recent experience (going to the zoo), or that help the child adjust to a change (moving to a new home). • Provide five to eight books per child--some in their home languages and some in English. Include a wide variety of books. Offer books with rhymes, repetition, and predictable events; nonsense and fantasy books; storybooks about everyday life; books about new ideas; poetry; alphabet and counting books; simple dictionaries (English and home languages); and easy-readers (for older preschoolers who are ready for them).

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Writing Preschoolers do scribble writing and copy shapes, letters, and words. • Encourage children to develop the small muscles used for writing. They can cut, paste, draw, paint, thread beads on a lace, roll play dough, connect small blocks, use a keyboard, play a drum, spread peanut butter on a cracker, zip a coat, and serve peas with a large spoon. • Set up a special place where children can practice writing. Provide a table and chairs and low, open shelves filled with lined and unlined paper, writing tools, junk mail and catalogs, office supplies, a typewriter, and other items to encourage children's make-believe play. • Include a few ready-made blank books (e.g., 10 pieces of paper folded in half and stapled on the fold) for children's use. Provide binding supplies such as cardboard for covers, a hole punch, string, or a stapler. Include opportunities for writing as a part of children's play. Offer writing materials and props for real workplaces--a restaurant, store, health clinic, or travel agency. Children can write menus, sales receipts, prescriptions, and tickets. • Put paper and markers near blocks so that children can make signs or labels for their block buildings. How to help families: Make sure every child has writing materials to use at home. Share donations of paper and crayons or markers with families. If necessary, include money in the budget to purchase writing materials for children to use at home.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Preschoolers are learning how writing is used. • Let children see how print is used to send messages and to provide information. Label shelves and containers to show where materials are kept. Put names, pictures, or symbols on children's cubbies. • Use print in English and children's home languages. Ask families to help you with the home languages if necessary. • Hang up written and picture versions of the daily schedule. Make a helper chart. Use signs to show how many children can use an area at a time. • Make step-by-step recipe cards that tell children what to do during a cooking activity. • Read aloud the photo caption for an interesting magazine or newspaper article. Tell the children what the article is about. Show them an unusual or funny picture and ask them to think of a title for the picture. Write down their titles, then post them on the bulletin board with the picture.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Preschoolers are learning how spoken and written words are connected. • Ask children to help you make signs that provide information, such as when to water the plants. On one side write, "Please water us." On the other write, "Thank you for watering us." • Put children's spoken words in writing. Ask children to tell you about their artwork. With their permission, write their descriptions at the bottom or on the back of the picture. • Ask questions to help children talk about an interesting experience they had together or special times they had with their families. Put their comments on a large sheet of paper. Hang the finished story where children and families can see it. 

Reading and Writing Play Materials

Children learn about reading and writing in several ways. They watch adults, try out their own ideas, solve problems, and figure out for themselves how spoken and written words are connected.

Families can help by providing a special place where children can read and write and by encouraging them to include reading and writing in their play activities. Here are some examples of reading and writing materials for young children.

Create a Special Place With:

Table (homemade or purchased, sized for young children)
Chair(s)
Desk and chair
Low, open shelves
Bulletin board
Clothesline and clothespins (to hang up children's writing)

Explore Letters and Numerals With:

Magnet boards and alphabet and number magnets
Alphabet and numeral blocks, tiles, and puzzles
Alphabet and numeral sponges, stamps, and stamp pads
Alphabet and counting books

Play Make-Believe With:

Clipboards
Envelopes
Junk mail, catalogs, coupons
Magazines
Empty food containers
File folders and boxes
Mailbag and mailbox

Write With and On:

Chalkboards (wall and lap)
Chalk (white and colored)
Easels
Paint
Brushes
Paper (lined and unlined, different sizes, colors, weights, textures)
Markers (washable, nontoxic, thick and thin tips)
Crayons
Colored pencils
Erasable boards, markers, and erasers
Magic slates
Ready-made blank books
Bookbinding materials (stapler, hole punch, laces)
Scissors (for older toddlers and preschoolers)
Typewriter
Computer and developmentally appropriate writing programs

American Library Association's *Suggested Book List for Young Readers*

This *Suggested Book List for Young Readers* provides suggestions for books that you can introduce to children at different ages.* Although some of these books have been developed for a particular age, many are old favorites that can be enjoyed at any age.

BIRTH THROUGH EIGHT MONTHS

The following books have simple rhymes and poems.

Big Fat Hen, by Keith Baker

Ten, Nine, Eight, by Molly Bang

Play Rhymes, by Marc Brown

Goodnight Moon, by Margaret Wise Brown

Tomie DePaola's Mother Goose, by Tomie DePaola

Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper: 50 Musical Finger Plays, by Tom Glazer

Rosie's Walk, by Pat Hutchins

Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young, by Jack Prelutsky

Have You Seen My Duckling?, by Nancy Tafuri

My First Mother Goose, by Rosemary Wells

EIGHT MONTHS THROUGH EIGHTEEN MONTHS

These books are short with a little text and many rhymes. At this age children really enjoy holding cardboard books and turning pages.

Moon Bear, by Frank Asch

Will I Have a Friend?, by Miriam Cohen

Corduroy, by Don Freeman

Where's Spot?, by Eric Hill

Mama, Do You Love Me?, by Barbara Joose

Peter's Chair, by Ezra Jack Keats

Pat the Bunny, by Dorothy Kunhardt

Clap Hands, by Helen Oxenbury

Seven Blind Mice, by Ed Young

"More, More, More", Said the Baby, by Vera Williams

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* The U.S. Department of Education recommends that parents review this list and make their own decision on the suitability of the books for their children.

EIGHTEEN THROUGH THIRTY-SIX MONTHS

These books have more text and an easy-to-follow story that moves along quickly.

The Little Red Hen, by Bryon Barton

Clifford the Big Red Dog, by Norman Bridwell

Wait Till the Moon is Full, by Margaret Wise Brown

Stellaluna, by Jannell Cannon

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle

Millions of Cats, by Wanda Gag

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, by Bill Martin Jr. and Lois Ehlert

Curious George, by H.A. Rey

The Cat in the Hat, by Dr. Seuss

The Bunny Planet, by Rosemary Wells

THREE TO FIVE YEARS

At this age children can enjoy more complex stories and understand humor.

Country Mouse and City Mouse, by Jan Brett

Stone Soup, by Marcia Brown

The Three Bears, by Paul Galdone

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins, by Eric Kimmel

The Story of Ferdinand, by Munro Leaf

Make Way for Ducklings, by Robert McCloskey

Tikki, Tikki, Tembo, by Arlene Mosel

The Tale of Peter Rabbit, by Beatrix Potter

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble, by William Steig

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile, by Bernard Waber

This reading list was developed at the American Library Association (ALA) under the Born to Read Project, which builds partnerships between librarians and health care providers to reach out to new and expectant parents and help them raise children who are "born to read."

Resources

AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* PUBLICATIONS

The following AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* publications have been placed on the U.S. Department of Education's Internet Web site <http://www.ed.gov> for your unlimited use.

- READ*WRITE*NOW! Basic Kit: Activities for Reading and Writing Fun
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Partners Tutoring Program
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Early Childhood Kit (of which this booklet is a part)
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Just Add Kids: A Resource Directory of Learning Partners, Reading Sites, and Other Literacy Organizations That Serve Children and Their Families
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Learning to Read, Reading to Learn: Helping Children with Learning Disabilities to Succeed

FEDERAL SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH FIVE

Corporation for National Service
Training and Technical Assistance, Rm. 9821
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525

Even Start
U.S. Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Ed.
600 Independence Avenue SW
Room 4400-Portals Building
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Title I
U.S. Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Ed.
600 Independence Avenue SW
Room 4400-Portals Building
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Head Start
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Public Affairs
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20202

Child Care Bureau
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Public Affairs
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20202

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health
Building 31, Room 2A32, MSC-2425
31 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013

Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Switzer Building, Room 4613
Washington, DC 20202

PARTNERSHIP
for Family
Involvement
in Education

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

Family-School Partnership Promise

Families and schools across America are increasingly accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. When families are involved in children's learning, at school and at home, schools work better and students learn more. Schools and families are working with employers and community organizations to develop local partnerships that support a safe school environment where students learn to challenging standards. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating in children's learning, everyone can contribute to the education process.

Coming together as families, local school board governance, administration, teachers and school staff, we form this partnership and affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning. We pledge to:

- Share responsibility at school and at home to give students a better education and a good start in life.
- Our school will be welcoming to families; reach out to families before problems arise; offer challenging courses; create safe and drug-free learning environments; organize tutoring and other opportunities to improve student learning; and support families to be included in the school decision-making process.
- Our families will monitor student attendance, homework completion and television watching; take the time to talk with and listen to their children; become acquainted with teachers, administrators and school staff; read with younger children and share a good book with a teen; volunteer in school when possible; and participate in the school decision-making process.
- Promote effective two-way communication between families and schools, by schools reducing educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families staying in touch with the school.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn how to help their children succeed in school and for school staff to work with families.
- Support family-school efforts to improve student learning by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following.)

School Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

Principal: _____ **Signature:** _____

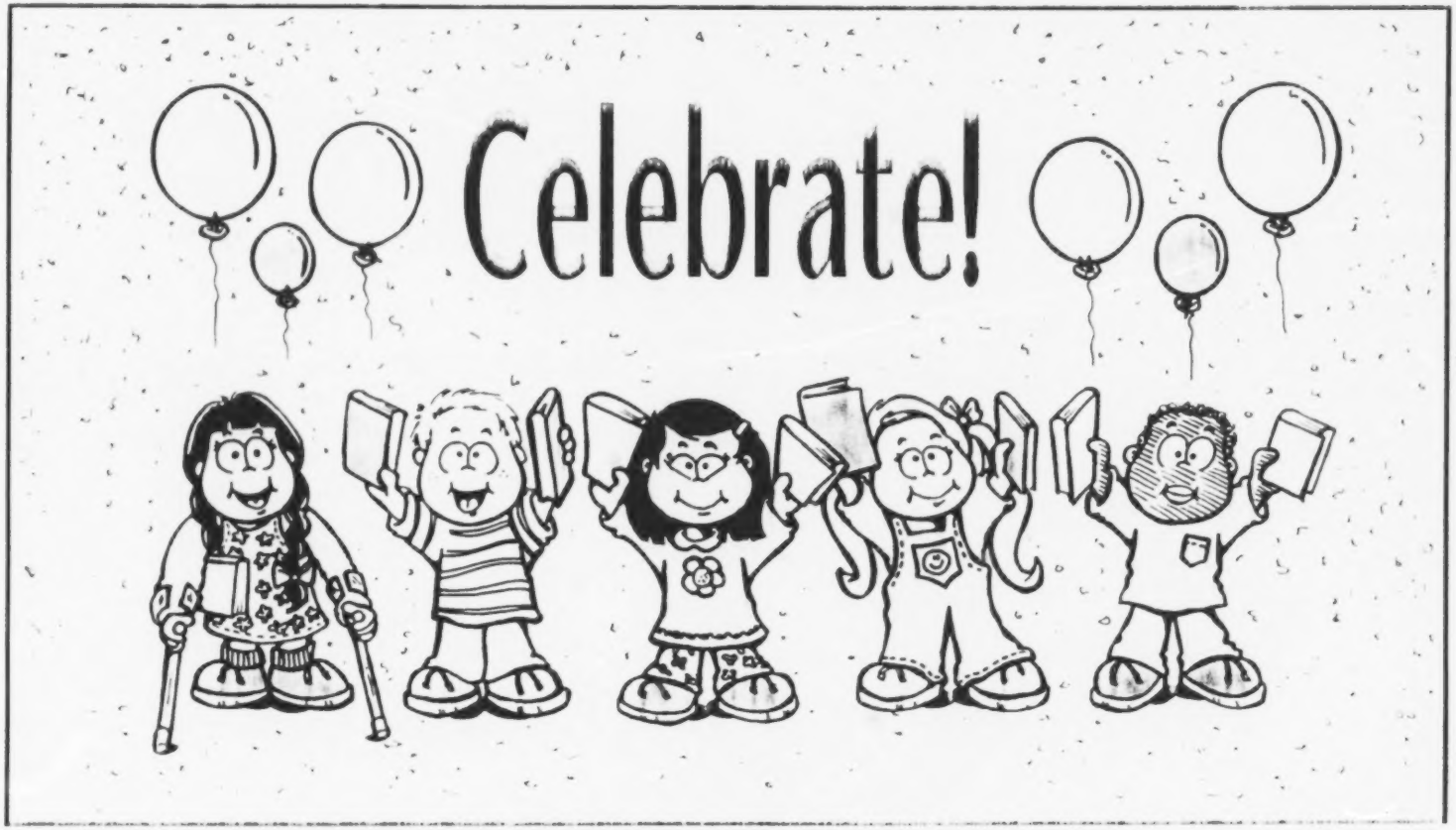
Parent Organization Representative: _____ **Signature:** _____

Teacher Representative: _____ **Signature:** _____

School Staff Representative: _____ **Signature:** _____

Contact Person: 51 **Title:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-401-3036 to receive your **Family-School Partnership Promise Certificate.**



AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

READY★SET★READ

1997-1998 EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTIVITY CALENDAR

A Joint Project of the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for National Service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Books and Beyond

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

June Tip of the Month

Encourage children to do things for themselves when they are ready. Let them feed and dress themselves, and clean up after themselves even if these tasks take more time and are not done perfectly.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Ask other friends or family members to share favorite stories with your child. Stories about the child's own history or culture are especially exciting. Ask the librarian to help you pick out books that have pictures and stories about people with the same ethnic background as your child.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Be a role model by checking out books that you would enjoy reading. When you get home, set aside a special time to read with your child.

Fruity Fan

Help your child make a colorful watermelon fan to keep cool all summer!

Materials:

- *paper plate*
- *crayons, markers, or paint*
- *watermelon seeds (if available)*
- *popsicle sticks*

Color or paint a one inch circle of green around the edge of a paper plate. Leaving a small ring of white next to the green, color the inside of the plate red. When the paint is dry, draw black seeds in the red center, or glue on real watermelon seeds. Glue a popsicle stick on the back of the plate and use as a fan.

Rhyme 'N' Play

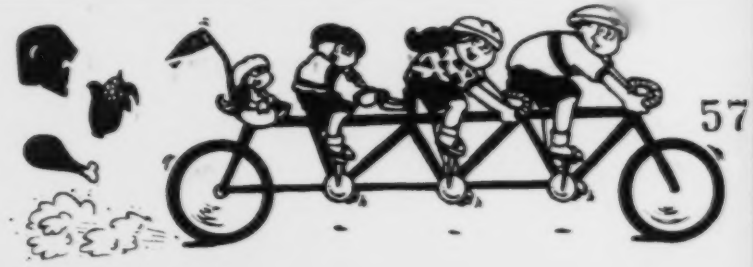
Touch the body parts named as you sing the words. Repeat the rhyme over and over, going faster each time.

Head, shoulders,
Knees and toes,
Knees and toes,
Head, shoulders,
Knees and toes,
Knees and toes.

Eyes and nose
and ears and mouth
Head, shoulders,
Knees and toes,
Knees and toes.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Cut out a food pyramid from the side of a cereal box or other food. Talk about the different food groups. Ask your child to name a favorite food and what food group it belongs to. 1	2	Story Time 3	Print the letters in your child's name. Ask him or her to name three words that begin with each letter of the name. 4	5	6	Library Outing 7
Fruity Fan 8	Story Time 9	Play "Peek-a-Boo" with your child, hiding behind a favorite book. Finish your game by reading the story. 10	Rhyme 'N' Play 11	Help your child cut pictures of healthy foods out of a magazine. Have the child glue the pictures on paper plates. Make a mobile by hanging the plates with yarn to a clothes hanger. 12	13	*Flag Day* Let your child draw a flag on a piece of paper. Attach a stick to one end, turn on the radio to lively music, and let your child march around the house carrying the flag. 14
Father's Day 15	Help your child make a book for someone special, drawing pictures showing what your child likes about this person. Write down what the pictures are about. Share it with the special person. 16	17	Have your child look in a mirror and name the features on his or her face. Ask your child what each part does, and whether the child has one or two of each part named. 18	19	Story Time 20	Library Outing *First Day of Summer* 21
Take your child outside with a bucket of water and a paint brush to "paint" his or her name, and to draw shapes and letters on the sidewalk with the water. 22	23	Have a pretend phone conversation with your child, asking what your child did yesterday, is doing today, and wants to do tomorrow. 24	Story Time 25	26	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 27	Fruity Fan 28
56 29	Rhyme 'N' Play 30					

JUNE
1997



Steppin' to the Beat

July Tip of the Month

Teach children songs, poems, and rhymes. Encourage them to dance, sing, and clap their hands to the music or words.

Special Activity Center

Rhyme 'N' Play

Let your child dance while you sing together.

Here we go 'round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush.
Here we go 'round the mulberry bush,
So early in the morning.

Repeat using:
This is the way we wash our clothes.
This is the way we scrub the floor.
This is the way we sweep the house.
This is the way we bake our bread.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Each time you open a book with your child, you take the child on an exciting journey. Open a world of new ideas in books and give your child a great start to learning. Remember, one of the best ways to encourage a love of reading is to have a regular time for sharing books with your child.

Puppet Making

Read or tell a story. Ask your child to pick out a favorite character and to explain the choice. Using a paper bag, crayons, magic markers, glue, construction paper or other materials, make a puppet of that character. Help your child retell the story using the puppet. Each week a new "character" can be created. By the end of the month you will have a collection of puppets your child can use to make up his or her own stories!

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child, take him or her to the children's section, and let your child pick out books to take home, read, and return during the next visit.

JULY 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Play music and dance with your child. Let your child use pots, pans, and spoons to create sounds. 1	2	Story Time 3	*Independence Day* Find a place to safely watch a fireworks display with your child. Talk about why you are proud to be an American. 4	Library Outing 5
Puppet Making 6	Take a "counting" walk. Pick something to count (cars, signs, flowers, birds, bikes) and as you walk, keep track of how many you see. 7	8	Play "Pat-a-Cake" with your child. Help your child count how many fingers there are on each hand. 9	Rhyme 'N' Play 10	11	Go for a reading picnic under the stars. Take a flashlight, a snack, and a few favorite books to read outside. Look for pictures that the stars make in the sky. 12
13	14	Sing "Old McDonald Had a Farm" with your child. Take turns making the animal sounds. 15	Rhyme 'N' Play 16	17	Watch a musical on TV with your child. Talk about what your child's favorite part was. Try to talk by singing. 18	19
Puppet Making 20	Let your child help with a household chore today, setting the table, emptying the trash, putting away the toys, or feeding a pet. When the work is done, thank your child for helping. 21	22	Story Time 23	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 24	25	Library Outing 26
Go somewhere you can play in the water today– a pool, a lake, the ocean, or under a sprinkler. 27	Story Time 28	Sing a simple song with your child. Count the words that rhyme. Make up a new song of your own using words that rhyme. 29	30	Rhyme 'N' Play 31		

August Tip of the Month

Talk with children as you play and do daily activities together. Ask your child lots of questions and be sure to listen to the answers.

Special Activity Center

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in August. Mark the dates on your calendar so you will remember to attend!

Bubble Time

Ingredients:

- *1/8 cup dishwashing liquid*
- *1 cup water*
- *bubble wand*

Mix soap and water in a plastic container. Let your child dip a bubble wand in the liquid and blow or run holding the blower against the wind.

Wand Ideas:

* *Straw*–Cut a drinking straw in half; then cut the tip 3 times and fold pieces back. Dip the tip in the bubble solution and blow!
* *Soda-Can Rings*–Cut one of the plastic rings off the plastic soda can holder. Tape to a wooden stick or pencil. Dip in the mixture and wave through the air.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Find a quiet, well-lit spot where you can sit comfortably with your child. Let the child pick out a book (even if it's the same one over and over) and enjoy spending time with your child in an imaginary world!

Rhyme 'N' Play

If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (Clap, clap.)
If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (Clap, clap.)
If you're happy and you know it,
Then your face will surely show it,
If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (Clap, clap.)

Add other verses, using motions that fit the words:

* *If you're sleepy and you know it, Close your eyes.*
* *If you're sad and you know it, Cry "Boo hoo!"*
* *If you're mad and you know it, Stamp your feet.*

AUGUST

1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Bubble Time 3	4	Make "Bugs on a Log" for a snack. Fill celery sticks with peanut butter and top with raisins. Go on a nature walk and see how many real bugs your child can find. 5	Rhyme 'N' Play 6	Play a game of leap frog. Measure how far your child can "hop." 7	8	9
Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 10	11	Story Time 12	Make up a song or rhyme using your child's name. Let your child add motions to the song as you sing it. 13	14	Have a family movie night at home. Pop popcorn and talk about your child's favorite part of the movie. Ask your child what was real and what was pretend. 15	Library Outing 16
Story Time 17	Have your child try to name five things that start with the letter "F," then five things that start with "U," then "N." Write down the words the child mentions. Then write the letters "FUN" to show your child how much fun letters are! 18	Rhyme 'N' Play 19	20	Play "Pat-a-Cake" with your child. 21	22	Fill a low shelf or drawer with safe toys, books, or empty containers for your child. Write your child's name on a piece of paper, let your child decorate it, and then tape it to the "special" place. 23
24 Bubble Time 64 31	Story Time 25	Count something with your child using the rhyme, "One potato, two potato, three potato, four. Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more!" 26	27	Rhyme 'N' Play 28	Play "catch" with your child. Stand a short distance from the child and toss or roll a large ball back and forth. Count aloud each time someone catches the ball. 29	Library Outing 65 30

September Tip of the Month

Take toddlers and preschoolers to the library so that they can choose books to read. Find out about the library's special books and services.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. When you are reading a book, magazine, or newspaper, give your child his or her own book or page to look at. Looking at books that don't have words still counts as "reading."

Create a "Me Book"

Make a book with your child. Have your child draw a self-portrait, a family picture, a favorite animal, a hand and a foot print, and a birthday cake to record his or her birthday. Include anything that helps the child tell his or her life story. Ask your child to tell you the story or ideas that go with each picture and record them at the bottom of each page. Join the pages together with yarn ties or brads. Let your child color the cover.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand and body movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb.
Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow.

It followed her to school one day, school one day, school one day.
It followed her to school one day, which was against the rules.

It made the children laugh and play, laugh and play, laugh and play.
It made the children laugh and play, to see a lamb at school.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Look for books that are written for children who are your child's age. Even babies enjoy picture books, especially ones made out of cloth. If you need help, ask a librarian to help you find just the right books!

SEPTEMBER 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Labor Day Go for a walk and collect flowers. Ask your child to think of words, other than "flowers," that start with the letter "F." 1	Rhyme 'N' Play 2	3	Show your child how to spell his or her full name, street address, town, city, and phone number. Repeat this information often so that he or she can memorize it. 4	5	Create a "Me Book" 6
Visit a bakery. Read the signs in the store. Share the smells and tastes of a special treat. 7	*Grandparent's Day* 8	Let your child use your keys to open the door to your house or car. Talk about other things or places that use keys (treasure chest, diary, padlock, jewelry box, bike lock, safe, stores, and offices). 9	10	Story Time 11	Take a reading picnic under the stars. Take a blanket, some popcorn or other treat, a flashlight, and a favorite storybook. When you finish your story, find pictures stars make in the sky. 12	Library Outing 13
Create a "Me Book" *Rosh Hashanah* 14	15	Story Time 16	17	Play music and dance with your child. Let your child use pots, pans, and spoons to create sounds. 18	Rhyme 'N' Play 19	Play "Peek-a-Boo" with your child, using a favorite book to hide behind. 20
Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 21	*First Day of Autumn* 22	*Yom Kippur* 23	Rhyme 'N' Play 24	25	Make up a story with your child as the main character. Let the child retell the story to you. 26	Library Outing 27
28	Talk with your child about the difference between hot and cold, big and small, open and closed, and other opposites. Help your child find or think of examples for each word. 29	Story Time 30				

October Tip of the Month

Keep a supply of books and other reading materials where children can reach them. Add new books as children's skills and interests change.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children love stories! Whether you read a story or tell a story of your own, your child is learning how to imagine, and how words communicate ideas. The most important thing you can do as you share a story with your child is to make it an enjoyable experience for you both.

Cook with a Book

Read or tell the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Let your child help make the porridge using the recipe below, or one on a hot cereal box.

Three Bears' Breakfast Porridge:

- *3 cups water*
- *1/2 cup raisins*
- *2 cups oatmeal*
- *1/4 teaspoon salt*
- *milk, brown sugar, & cinnamon*

Add salt and raisins to water and boil. Add oatmeal. Stir and cook 5 minutes. When the porridge is "just right," serve with milk, brown sugar, and cinnamon.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand motions to follow along with the words of the rhyme.

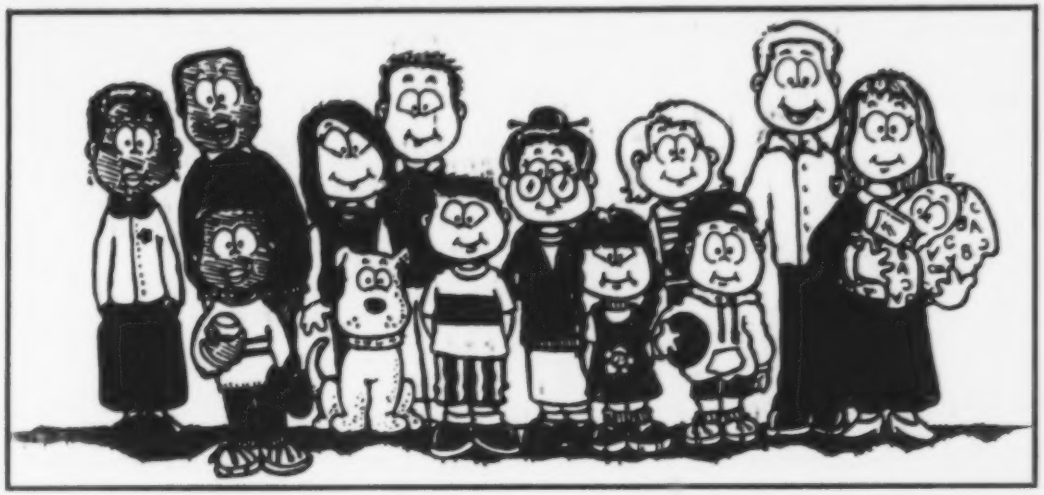
Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.
And Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the spout again.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find a book on tape and a tape player that can be checked out. Plan a special family time to enjoy listening to the tape together. If you have your own tape recorder, you can record yourself reading the library books so your child can enjoy them later.

OCTOBER 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			Story Time 1	2	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 3	4
Cook with a Book 5	6	Find several boxes of different sizes. Have your child line them up from smallest to largest. See if the child can stack the boxes without having them fall. 7	Rhyme 'N' Play 8	Read a story to your child. In the middle of the story, have the child pretend to be the author. Ask how he or she would end the story. 9	10	Library Outing 11
12	*Columbus Day* This is the day we celebrate the discovery of America. Talk with your child about an imaginary voyage the child would like to take. What would your child like to discover? How would your child get there? 13	Story Time 14	Plan "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud, play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 15	16	Rhyme 'N' Play 17	Make a pumpkin face. Color a paper plate orange. Glue a green scrap of paper to the top for a stem. Let your child color a face on the "pumpkin." Print your child's name on the back of the plate. 18
19	20	Sing a song! Teach your child the songs or rhymes you loved as a child. Help your child make up a silly song. 21	Story Time 22	Play "Peek-a-Boo" hiding behind your child's favorite book. 23	24	Library Outing 25
Cook with a Book 26	27	Rhyme 'N' Play 28	29	Story Time 30	*Halloween* Make up your own silly, funny, or scary story. Ask your child to tell how his or her story can end happily-ever-after. 31	



We Are Family

November Tip of the Month

Point out to children the printed words at home, child care, and in the community.

Special Activity Center

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Pick out books that have lots of colorful pictures or photographs and few words. Let your child look at the pictures and tell you what he or she thinks is happening in the story.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. A child who looks at books and hears stories read, learns that words and ideas can be written down, and that marks on paper have meaning. Show your child that there are things to read everywhere. Make a game of finding things with words on them (like soup cans, cereal boxes, comics). This will help your child to see how important it is to be able to read.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.

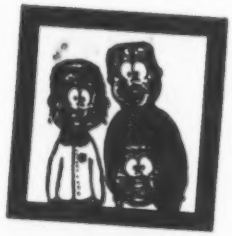
Star light, star bright
First star I see tonight.
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.

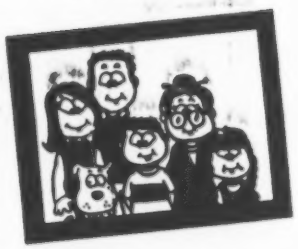
Turkey Placemats

Materials:

- *construction paper*
- *crayons or colored markers*

Trace your child's hand on the paper. Help your child make a "turkey" by coloring the fingers different colors for feathers. Add feet, eyes, and a beak. Print your child's name in the center of the turkey. Let the child decorate around the outside edge of the paper. Each time you make a new "turkey" the child can print another name of family or friends, until there are enough turkeys to use at your Thanksgiving meal.





NOVEMBER
1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Library Outing 1
Help your child write a poem about your family. Be creative. Start each line with a letter from the word "family." Encourage the child to draw a picture to go with it. 2	Story Time 3	*Election Day* Have a "Family Election." Read two books together. Have each person vote for his or her favorite book. Count up the votes. Which book wins? 4	5	Rhyme 'N' Play 6	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud, play games, or listen to music with your child. 7	8
Turkey Placemats 9	Help your child make a puzzle. Cut up a pretty card or magazine cover in large pieces. Encourage your child to put the picture back together. 10	*Veterans' Day* 11	Story Time 12	Cut straws into different lengths. Let your child line them up from shortest to longest. 13	14	Have a Recycling Day. Set aside everything that your family uses today that can be recycled. Talk about why recycling is a good idea. Take the things to a recycling bin. 15
Put on a family play. Dress up in costumes and act out a simple story. Pop popcorn for a snack afterwards. 16	17	Story Time 18	Every time your child has to climb up or down stairs today, count out loud with the child, each step he or she takes. 19	20	Rhyme 'N' Play 21	22
23 Turkey Placemats 76 30	Print out two sets of alphabet letters: one upper case (capitals), one lower case (small letters). Cut the letters out, mix them up and play a match-up game with your child (A–a, B–b, C–c). 24	25	Story Time 26	*Thanksgiving Day* At dinner, have each person mention one thing he or she is thankful for. 27	28	Library Outing 77 29

December Tip of the Month

Show children how you read and write every day to have fun and to get things done.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. The best way for your child to learn to love reading and books is to have a reading experience each day. Reading can be done anywhere—in a car, a fast-food restaurant, a bus, an office, in the park, or at home. Keep books or other reading material handy, so it's always an easy activity to choose.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand motions to go with the words.

Over the river and through the woods,
To Grandmother's house we go.
The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh,
Through the white and drifted snow.
Over the river and through the woods,
Oh how the wind does blow.
It stings the toes and bites the nose,
As over the fields we go.

Library Outing

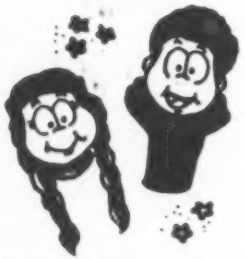
Visit the local public library with your child. Try to find books about a variety of holidays and traditions that are written for children. Find out if there are any special displays or activities planned for children this month that you could attend with your child.

King/Queen for a Day

Materials:

- *construction paper, glue, glitter, buttons, yarn, old jewelry, or any craft items you have.*

Measure around the top of your child's head. Cut a piece of paper to fit. Cut the bottom straight and the top in points to look like a crown. Let your child decorate the crown with craft items. Have the child trace or print his or her name on the back of the crown and then attach the ends. Let the child wear the crown for the day. What would he/she do as King/Queen?

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Story Time 1	Set a red, a yellow, and a green apple on the table. Ask your child to name the colors. Cut the apples open and talk about how they have different colors on the outside, but are the same on the inside, just like people. Enjoy your snack! 2	Rhyme 'N' Play 3	Different people celebrate different holidays. Talk about your child's favorite holiday. What does the holiday celebrate? 4	5	Library Outing 6
Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 7	8	Story Time 9	Play the "colored food" game. How many foods can your child think of that are red? green? yellow? orange? What "color" foods did your child eat today? 10	11	Make a Family Collage. Let your child cut pictures out of a magazine of things the child does with your family. Glue them on a piece of paper with "My Family" written on top. 12	King/Queen for a Day 13
14	Rhyme 'N' Play 15	*Beethoven's Birthday* Play music and dance with your child. Let the child use pots, pans, and spoons to create sounds. 16	Story Time 17	Help your child memorize his or her full name and address. Talk about where the name came from and where your child was born. If you have a map, find the city you live in now and the places different people in your family were born. 18	19	Library Outing 20
King/Queen for a Day *First Day of Winter* *First Day of Kwanzaa* 21	22	Story Time *Hanukkah begins at sundown* 23	Watch a children's movie as a family. Talk about what makes the characters in the movie different from each other. 24	*Christmas* 25	Rhyme 'N' Play 26	27
Give your child an assortment of beans, buttons, or small stones to be sorted by color, size, or shape. When the sorting is finished, the child can glue the objects onto a card and give it to someone special. 28	29	Draw a picture of a clock. Point to the numbers and let your child tell you what the number is. Talk about what the child does at different times of the day and night. 30	*New Year's Eve* 31			

DECEMBER

1997

January Tip of the Month

Read with your children at a regular time each day and whenever they ask you.

Special Activity Center

Mystery Bag Search

Place small, safe objects that all start with the same letter (e.g., spoon, soap, straw, sock) in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag. Without your child peeking, let him or her guess what it is. Talk about what letter all the objects start with.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children love to hear the human voice. Even babies find great comfort in listening to voices. What better way for them to hear you speak than through reading to them! In fact, one of the best ways to encourage a love of reading is to have a regular time for sharing books with your child each day.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Follow the motions with your child.

Hands on shoulders, hands on knees,
Hands behind you,
If you please.

Touch your shoulders, now your nose,
Now your hair,
And now your toes.

Hands up high as before,
Now clap your hands,
One-two-three-four!

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. If you don't already have a library card, apply for one so that you can check out books and magazines (some libraries will even let you check out toys, videos, and tapes). January is a great month to look at books on weather.

JANUARY
1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				New Year's Day 1	Mystery Bag Search 2	Draw a face on both of your child's index fingers with a washable marker. Let your child retell a favorite story with the "puppet fingers" as the characters. 3
4	Story Time 5	Use an egg carton to teach your child how to sort. Give your child a variety of buttons, candy, or coins and let him or her sort them by color, size, or item. 6	Rhyme 'N' Play 7	8	Plan an indoor picnic for dinner. Let your child bring some favorite books to read. 9	Library Outing 10
Mystery Bag Search 11	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 12	13	Trace your child's hand on a piece of paper. Ask your child to think of different ways people can be kind to others. Write his or her ideas on each finger of the hand drawing. 14	Story Time *Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday* 15	16	*Benjamin Franklin's Birthday* Help your child learn to write his or her own name. Print it for your child to trace. Let him or her pretend to write and sign a very important message. 17
18	Story Time *Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Celebrated* 19	Help your child name letters of the alphabet in the newspaper headlines or a magazine cover. Cut out five new letters for your child to keep and learn. 20	21	Have your child point out all the round-shaped things nearby. Have a round snack of banana slices, crackers, cookies, or tortillas. 22	23	Library Outing 24
Rhyme 'N' Play 25	26	*Mozart's Birthday* 27	Print the alphabet on a piece of paper. Point to each letter as you sing the Alphabet Song together. Let your child trace the letters. Pick out the letters used to spell your child's name. 28	29	Story Time 30	31

February Tip of the Month

Create a special place for children to read and write that is well lit and comfortable.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Start by choosing books that are written for children and have brightly colored, simple pictures. As you read, let your child point to the pictures and talk about what is happening to the characters and which character he or she likes best. Be sure to read with lots of enthusiasm so that your child can tell you're enjoying story time as well!

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in February. Mark the dates on your calendar so you remember to attend.

Cookie Creations

Ingredients:

- *3/4 cup shortening*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *2-1/2 cups flour*
- *1 teaspoon salt*
- *2 eggs*
- *1 teaspoon baking powder*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla*

Mix shortening, sugar, one egg, and vanilla. Blend in flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover; chill one hour. Roll dough 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured board. Using cookie cutter, cut in desired shapes. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Mix one egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon water, then divide into three containers. Add a different drop of food coloring to each container and mix. Using small brushes, paint the cookies. Bake 6-8 minutes in a 400 degree oven. You can also use ready-made cookie rolls and frosting from the grocery store.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand and body movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

I'm a little teapot,
Short and stout.
Here is my handle,
Here is my spout.
When I get all steamed up,
Then I shout,
Just tip me over
and pour me out.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Help your child write and send a letter to a friend. Decorate it with markers or crayons. 1	*Groundhog Day* 2	Let your child help set the table for dinner. Let the child practice counting out forks, plates, or cups. 3	Story Time 4	Make a story block. Draw or cut out pictures and paste them on all sides of an empty milk carton. Let your child tell stories by turning to the different pictures. 5	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 6	Library Outing 7
Cookie Creations 8	Rhyme 'N' Play 9	10	Make Valentines and send them to special friends. Either use purchased cards or make your own out of colored paper. Let your child write or trace his or her name on each. 11	*Abraham Lincoln's Birthday* 12	13	*Valentine's Day* Cut five different sizes of hearts out of paper. Mix them up and place them in a pile. Let your child line up the hearts from smallest to largest. 14
Name four things that begin with the "B" sound. Now create a poem or story using the four "B" words. 15	*Presidents' Day* 16	Teach your child the "Golden Rule" (treat others as you would like to be treated). Talk about what it means and how it can be followed. 17	18	Play the "Color Game." Point to solid-colored objects and ask your child what the color of each is. Repeat the name of the color and let your child guess the first letter in each word. 19	Story Time 20	21
George Washington's Birthday 22	Story Time 23	24	*Ash Wednesday* Play "Search and Match" with your child. Collect as many pairs of shoes as you can find in your house. Mix them up and place them in a pile. Let your child match up the shoes in pairs. 25	Rhyme 'N' Play 26	Talk about the difference between night and day. Let your child draw a "night" picture and a "day" picture. Print the words "day" and "night" on each. Let your child trace the letters. 27	Library Outing 28

FEBRUARY

1998

March Tip of the Month

Limit TV viewing to no more than two hours a night. Help children make other choices for their free time activities (e.g., reading, writing, playing, talking).

Special Activity Center

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find a quiet corner where you and your child can look at the books your child chooses. March is a great month to look at books that help your child learn about colors, numbers, or letters.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Try "Story Time" just before bedtime. Let your child pick the books he or she wants to read. It will help your child settle down for sleep.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Follow the motions with your child.

Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Give a little clap!
Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Lay them in your lap.

Have your child stand in a safe place. Ask him or her to open and close eyes, then mouth, then hands. Have your child show you how he or she can open and close arms. Now repeat the rhyme.

Watch Me Grow

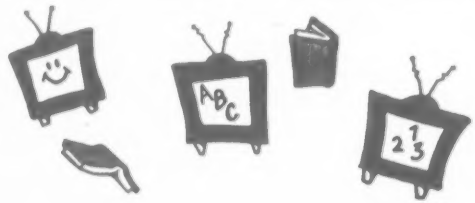
Materials:

- *egg carton*
- *bean seeds*
- *potting soil*

Poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup and fill the cups with soil. Plant two bean seeds in each cup. Water the soil and put the cups in a sunlit place. Check every couple of days and water if the soil is dry. Every few days, check to see how the seeds are growing. Measure the sprouts and keep a record of their size on the lid of the egg carton.

MARCH 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	Rhyme 'N' Play *Dr. Seuss's Birthday* 2	Print two sets of alphabet letters: one upper case (capitals), one lower case (small letters). Cut the letters out, mix them up, and play a match-up game with your child (A–a, B–b, C–c). 3	4	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 5	6	Library Outing 7
Help your child think of an imaginary land. Make up a story of silly characters who live in this imaginary place. 8	9	Story Time 10	With your child, count out the number of forks, spoons, napkins, cups, and plates needed for dinner and let your child set the table. 11	Rhyme 'N' Play 12	Watch a children's movie with your child. Talk about what is real and what is pretend in the movie after it is over. 13	Watch Me Grow 14
Rhyme 'N' Play 15	Plan a "green" dinner. Let your child think of green foods to serve (e.g., celery with cream cheese, green beans, lettuce, green apples, or cabbage) or add a drop of green food coloring to scrambled eggs. 16	*St. Patrick's Day* 17	Go for a walk with your child. Find a safe spot of dirt or sand and let your child draw shapes and letters in the ground with a stick. 18	19	Story Time *First Day of Spring* 20	21
22	Story Time 23	Watch an educational TV show with your child. Talk about the child's favorite part of the show. What new things did your child learn? 24	25	Play "Word Rhyme" with your child. Take turns thinking of silly words and saying as many words that rhyme as you can (e.g., fly, by, my, pie, why, sky, shy). 26	27	Library Outing 28
Watch Me Grow 02 29	Play "Pat-A-Cake" with your child. 30	31				



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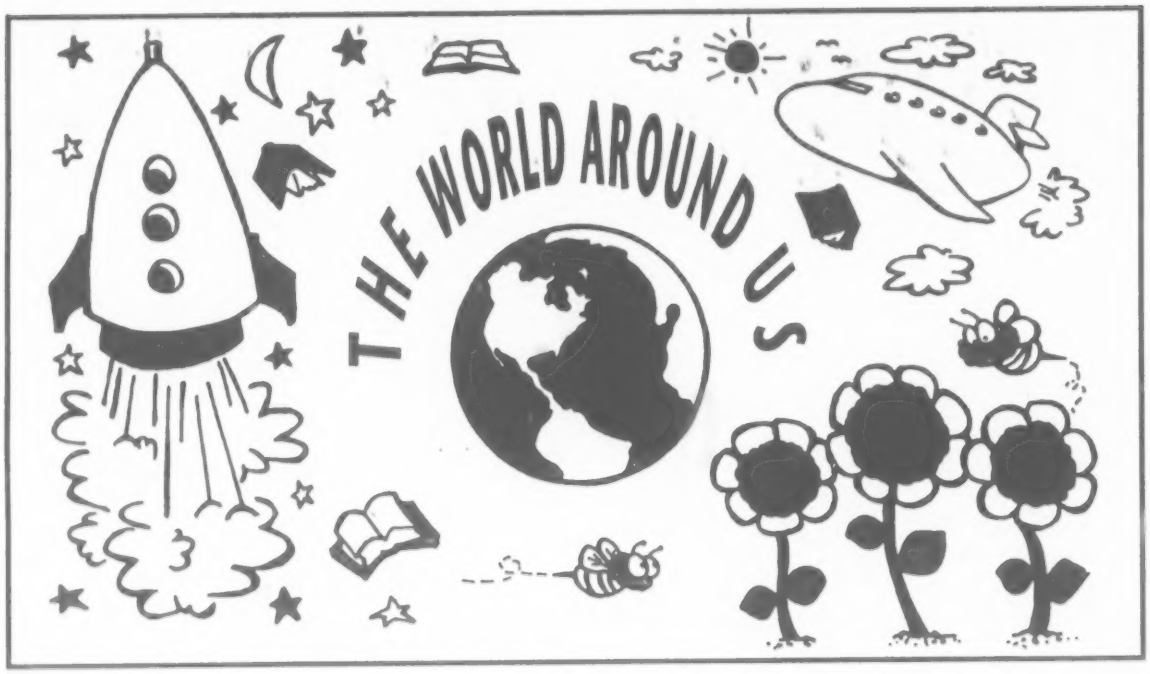


April Tip of the Month

Encourage your child to experience and discover new things. The more opportunities children have to see and do, the more they will understand the world around them.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children who learn to love books will be children who grow up to be good readers. The very best time for children to learn to love books is while they are young. You can help them by making story time a regular part of their day.

Candy Crystals

Ingredients:

- *1 cup boiling water*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *1 pencil*
- *1 glass jar*
- *3 pieces of string*

Combine the water and sugar in a dish. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Cool slightly. Carefully pour the water into a jar. Tie the string to a pencil. Balance the pencil across the top of the jar with the string hanging inside. Crystals will begin to grow in a few hours. Check every few days. Ask your child questions about what is happening. Does the candy feel hard or soft? Does it taste sweet or sour? Which is the shortest piece, which is longest? Is the candy growing fast or slowly?

Rhyme 'N' Play

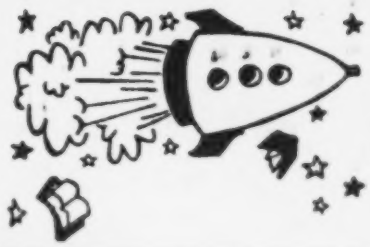
Follow the motions with your child.

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped his head.
Momma called the doctor and the doctor said, "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Repeat using:
Four little monkeys
Three little monkeys
Two little monkeys
One little monkey jumping on the bed,
He fell off and bumped his head.
Momma called the doctor,
and the doctor said
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Library Outing

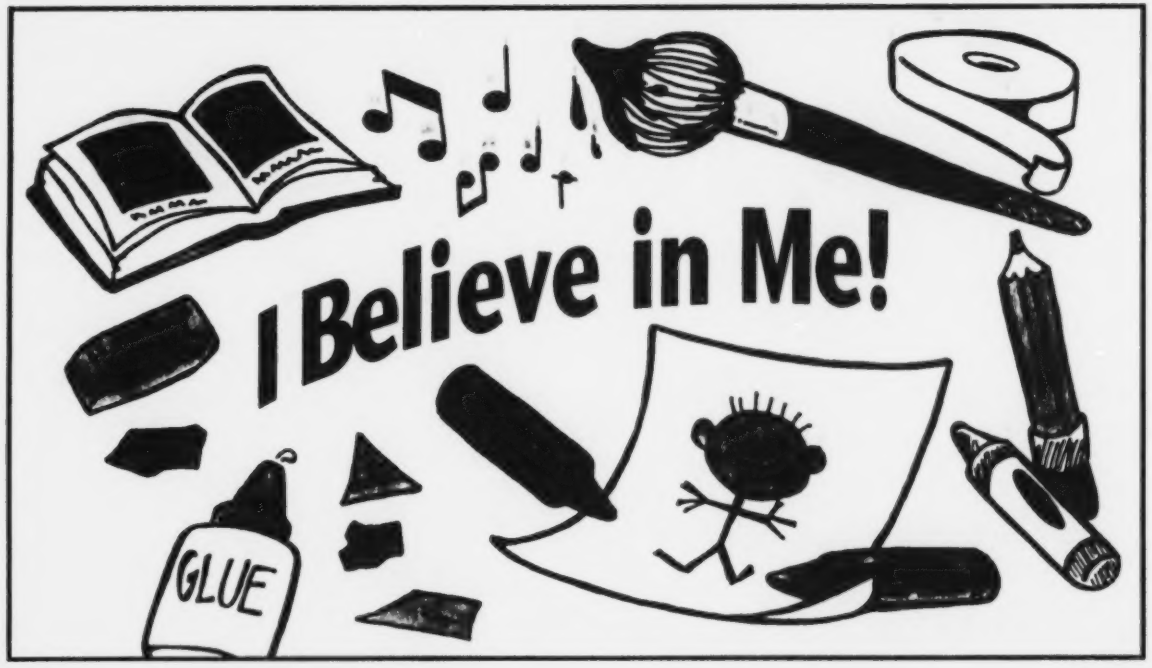
Visit the local public library with your child. Take your child to the children's section to pick out books to take home, read, and return during the next visit. As soon as children are able to write their name, they can apply for a library card of their own.



APRIL

1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			April Fools' Day Make your child laugh! Tell a joke, read a funny story or poem, sing a silly song, or draw a cartoon. 1	Story Time 2	Read or tell a favorite story with your child. When you finish, ask your child to tell you what happens first, second, and last in the story. 3	4
Story Time *Palm Sunday* 5	6	7	Play a game by counting how many square-shaped objects your child can find today. How many round ones? Which shape won (more squares or circles)? 8	Rhyme 'N' Play 9	*Good Friday* Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 10	Library Outing *Passover begins at sundown* 11
Easter Sunday 12	Rhyme 'N' Play 13	Help your child name the letters of the alphabet in newspaper or magazine headlines. Can your child find the letters of his or her own name there? 14	15	Cut the tops off of three carrots. Have your child place them in a shallow dish with 1/2 cup of water. Water daily. Have your child measure the green tops as they grow. 16	Candy Crystals 17	18
Story Time 19	Talk about a favorite family tradition with your child. What month is it celebrated in? Have your child name the months of the year with you. 20	21	*Earth Day* 22	Let your child help set the table for dinner. Practice counting out forks, plates, or cups. 23	*Arbor Day* 24	Library Outing 25
Help your child make a puzzle by cutting an old photo, greeting card, or calendar picture into large pieces. Let him or her put the pieces back together on a sheet of paper. 26	27	28	Story Time 29	30		



May Tip of the Month

Keep writing materials such as washable, nontoxic crayons and markers, paints and brushes, and different kinds of paper where children can reach them.

Special Activity Center

Lollipop Cookies

Ingredients:

- *3/4 cup shortening*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *2-1/2 cups flour*
- *1 teaspoon salt*
- *popsicle sticks*
- *2 eggs*
- *1 teaspoon baking powder*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla*

Mix shortening, sugar, one egg, and vanilla. Blend in flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover; chill one hour. Roll dough into a long log that is 2-1/2 inches wide. Refrigerate one hour. Slice in 1/4 inch circles; place on ungreased cookie sheet. Paint cookies by mixing one egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon pqwater. Divide paint into three containers; add a drop of food coloring to each. Using small brushes, paint the cookies. Place a stick in the dough to create a "lollipop." Bake 6-8 minutes in a 400 degree oven. You can also use ready-made cookie rolls and frosting from the grocery store.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in May. Mark the dates on your calendar so you can remember to attend!

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. As your child is having fun hearing the stories, you are helping the child learn to think, and put ideas and words together. Use different voices for the characters in the book, use a puppet or a stuffed toy to tell the story, or let your child "read" the book to you by looking at the pictures and making up the story.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Have your child follow along, holding up the number of fingers as you say the rhyme.

One, two,
Buckle my shoe.
Three, four,
Shut the door.
Five, six,
Pick up sticks.
Seven, eight,
Lay them straight.
Nine, ten, a big fat hen.

Now have your child jump or hop each time you say a number.

MAY 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					May Day Make a bouquet of flowers out of opened-up cupcake liners. Write a message at the center of each flower for someone special. Glue or tape a straw or popsicle stick for a stem. Tie the flowers together with a ribbon. 1	Library Outing 2
Read the newspaper comics with your child. Let your child choose a favorite one to cut out, and have your child tell you what is happening in the picture. Your child can even make up a story to go with the pictures! 3	4	Story Time *Cinco de Mayo* 5	6	Rhyme 'N' Play 7	Help your child make an indoor fort using a sheet, blanket, or towel. "Build" it over chairs. Let your child read books with a flashlight inside the fort. 8	9
Lollipop Cookies *Mother's Day* 10	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 11	Rhyme 'N' Play 12	Cut the letters in your child's name out of a magazine. Let your child glue the letters in the right order on a piece of paper. He or she can also cut out pictures to decorate around the name. 13	14	15	Let your child use chalk to make sidewalk drawings. Draw a circle and a square. Ask your child to draw animals out of the shapes. 16
Go for a nature walk. Take an empty egg carton to collect treasures along the way. Later, let your child glue the things that have been collected on paper and write the name next to each item. 17	Rhyme 'N' Play 18	Play the color game. Point to items around the house or outside and have your child tell you what color you are pointing to. 19	Story Time 20	21	Put together a costume box for your child. Have your child dress up in old clothes, hats, scarves, and shoes. Then, your child and friends can act out a favorite story or make up a new one! 22	Lollipop Cookies 23
24 Story Time 31	*Memorial Day (observed)* Sketch an American flag on a piece of paper. Tear up pieces of red, white, and blue construction paper and have your child glue the pieces onto the picture, making a "mosaic" flag. 25	26	Give your child a simple job to do, such as cleaning up toys, washing a sink, or feeding a pet. Have your child look at a clock at the beginning and the end of the job. Did the clock change? 27	Rhyme 'N' Play 28	29	Library Outing *Memorial Day (traditional)* 30

Acknowledgments

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

Corporation for National Service
Harris P. Wofford
Chief Executive Officer

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Donna E. Shalala
Secretary

Books and Beyond
Ellie Topolovac
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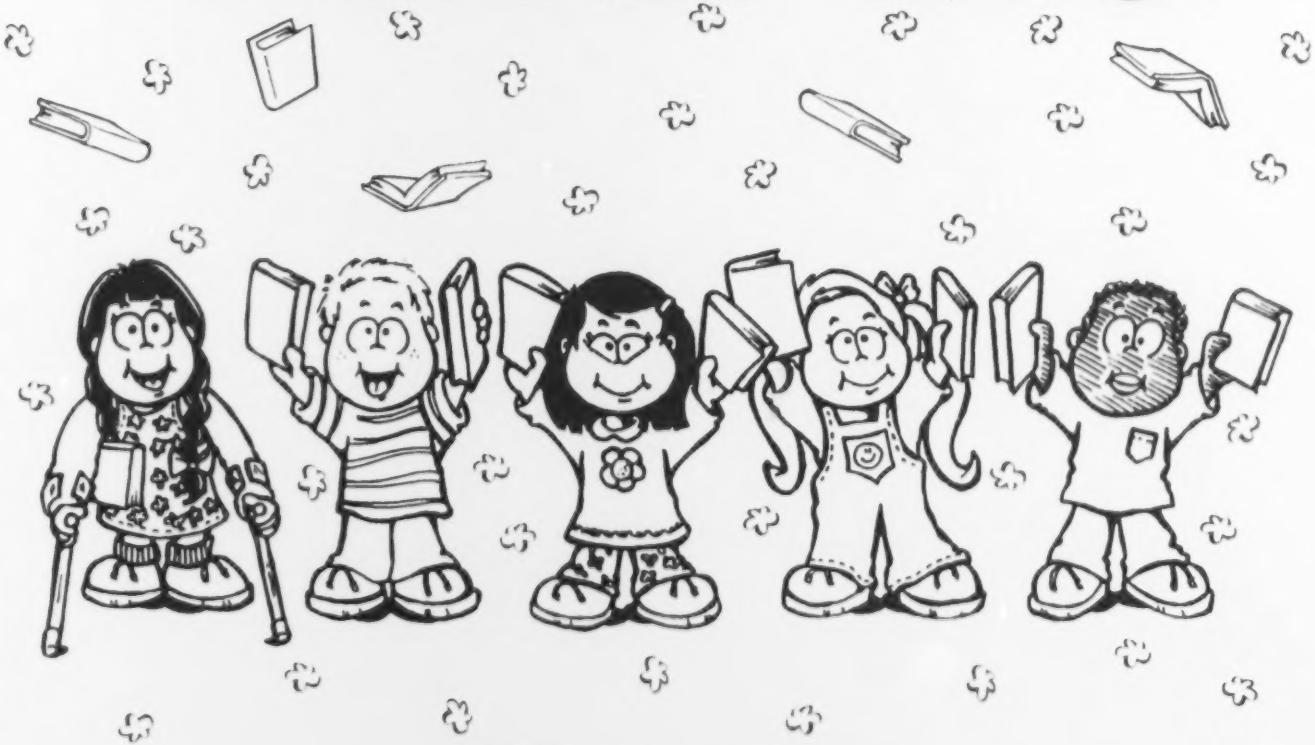
Special thanks to:
Paula Taylor of Books and Beyond for writing and developing this calendar; Eve Guianan of Books and Beyond for designing and illustrating it; and Sharon Robinson and Cynthia Dorfman of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education for their support of this effort.

Celebrate!



AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

READY ★ SET ★ READ

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WHAT MANY CHILDREN DO IN LANGUAGE

Age		What many children do...	If you have concerns about your child's development, talk with a professional such as a pediatrician...
Young Babies	Newborn	Babies listen and respond to your voice and other sounds. they tell their feelings by cooing, gurgling, smiling, and crying.	★ If your 3-month-old does not respond to your voice and other sounds.
	3 to 8 months	Babies play with sounds and they babble to themselves. They use sounds to communicate (smiling at the sound of a happy voice, and crying or looking unhappy on hearing an angry voice). Babies can play peek-a-boo. They wave arms and kick feet to show excitement, and they enjoy being read to.	★ If your 8-month-old is not making several sounds or does not reach for and grasp objects.
Crawlers and Walkers	8 to 12 months	Babies understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in tone of voice. If someone asks, "Where's Mommy?" babies will look for their mother. Babies understand simple words, such as "Da Da." Babies put books in their mouths and turn pages in sturdy books.	★ If your baby does not look at people who talk to him or her. If your baby is not pointing at or making sounds to get what he or she wants, like favorite toys.
	12 to 18 months	Babies say first words. They understand a few words and simple directions. They know their own names. They will give you a toy if you ask for it. Babies create long babbling sentences and look at picture books with interest.	★ If your 18-month-old does not say more than a few words clearly.
Toddlers	18 to 24 months	Toddlers put two or more words together to make short sentences like "want juice" or "car go." Toddlers learn new words quickly. They can copy adult sounds, words, and motions. Toddlers ask and answer simple questions. They can use crayons and markers for scribbling.	★ If your 20-month-old cannot follow simple requests, such as, "Come to Daddy." If your 24-month-old does not use two words together.
	24 to 36 months	Older toddlers listen to stories being read. They like to play pretend games. They love asking "why" questions. They use "no" and "not" a lot. Toddlers enjoy looking at picture books, turning pages, and naming objects they see. Their scribbling is becoming more like writing.	★ If your 2-year-old does not ask questions or respond to simple questions with "yes" or "no."
Preschoolers	3 to 4	Young preschoolers make comments and requests, and	★ If your 3- to 4-year-old does not use language

49" 48" 47" 46" 45" 44" 43" 42"

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years	tell others what to do. They can talk about things that happened and make up stories. They listen attentively to stories and retell stories themselves. They enjoy books that tell about real things as well as make-believe. They may revert to toddler behavior when feeling upset or shy. They make shapes such as circles and squares and pretend to write the way they have seen adults write.	freely, experiment with verbal sounds, and begin to use language to solve problems and learn concepts.
4 to 5 years	Preschoolers know the names and sex of family members and other personal information. They play with words and make up silly words and stories. They are beginning to draw figures that represent people, animals, and objects. They understand that pictures, numbers, words, and letters are symbols of real things and ideas. They "write" as a way to tell stories and offer information. They enjoy "reading" on their own. They may recognize a few words such as their name or words on signs.	★ If your child is embarrassed and disturbed by his or her speech, or if you or your child's caregiver have concerns about your child's language skills.
5 to 6 years	Children can recognize and reproduce many shapes, letters, and numbers. They are gaining control over writing and drawing tools. They understand that letters written on a page represent spoken words. They use invented spelling (tp for top, Mry for Mary). They dictate stories for others to write. They enjoy using computers.	★ Work with your child's teacher to assess his or her language skills through the elementary school system.

ACTIVITIES TO HELP CHILD LEARN ABOUT LANGUAGE

Here are some activities to help your child learn about language. Do them for as long as your child enjoys them. Then add new activities as the child grows older.

Newborn to 3 months	Listen and talk to your baby throughout the day. ★ Find out what your baby's sounds and actions mean. Talk to your child about what he or she seems to be saying. ★ While feeding, diapering, and bathing your baby, take time to sing songs, say nursery rhymes, and smile and coo in response to the baby's smiles and coos. ★ Smile and praise your baby for learning something new.
3 to 8 months	Talk and play with your baby. ★ Use words and play actions when talking with your baby. ★ Play games with your baby, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake, that teach your child about taking turns when communicating with another person. ★ Place a rattle in your baby's hand. Hold out a squeeze toy for your baby to grab. ★ Hand things to your baby and ask the baby to hand them back.
8 to 12 months	Read and tell stories with your baby every day. ★ Make reading a shared experience. Point to pictures and name the objects. ★ Provide books that are safe to touch and taste. Cloth, vinyl, and washable books are good for babies to handle. ★ When you read to your baby, hold the baby on your lap and hold the book so that the baby can see the pictures. ★ Use puppets, dolls, and other toys as story props.

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12 to 18 months	Provide play materials that match your baby's skill and interest. ★ Let your child "play telephone." Have a pretend telephone conversation. ★ Let your child play with pots, pans, wooden spoons, plastic containers, and other safe household items. ★ Arrange pillows and other objects on the floor for your child to crawl around or on and play with.
18 to 24 months	Help your toddler talk about the present, the past and the future. ★ Help your toddler learn new words to talk about what he or she did in the past and will do in the future. "I think it's going to be sunny tomorrow. What would you like to do?" ★ Discuss the day's events at bedtime. "Remember when we went to the park?"
24 to 36 months	Read books and do activities that let toddlers join in. ★ Play make-believe with your toddler. Provide props so that the toddler can play dress-up or doctor. ★ Arrange a special time for reading. ★ Respond to your toddler's request to be read to. ★ Read some of the same books again and again, and encourage your toddler to join in with the words he or she knows.
3 to 4 years	Provide books in English and in your family's home language. ★ Let your child see him- or herself in books. Choose some books about families like yours and people from your cultural and ethnic group. ★ Have a special place for books, magazines, and other reading materials in the home. Your child should be able to reach books without help in a reading corner and in other places around the home. ★ Help your child to create his or her own "This Is Me" album. Together with your child look at and talk about the family album, photographs, or special memorabilia.
4 to 5 years	Show your child how reading and writing are important in daily life. ★ Point out the print around you and show how it serves a purpose. Watch TV together and talk about books that relate to topics seen on TV. ★ Let your child see you enjoying a book or magazine often. ★ Encourage reading in different places. When you go out with your child, take books for the child to read in the car or on the bus.
5 to 6 years	Make sure that your child has writing materials and places to write. ★ Let your child see you write every day. ★ Put writing materials for your child—paper, pencils, crayons, markers, and chalk—in an open box on a low shelf so that the child can reach them easily. ★ Talk with your child about his or her writing. ★ If you cannot read the words your child has written, ask your child to read the writing to you. Over time, your child will learn how to write words that others can read.

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A Joint Project of the Corporation for National Service, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

PLEASE HANG CHART ON THE WALL 2 FEET FROM THE FLOOR

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